



HPCAI Update

Bi-weekly News for Hospice Professionals in Iowa

March 20, 2009

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Hospice Regulatory and Reimbursement Update Scheduled

Nationally recognized hospice expert, Mary Michal, will present a one-day conference focusing on several of the key considerations for any hospice as it strives to meet its mission, comply with new and comprehensive regulations and ensure that claims will be paid.

Topics covered during the day will include board governance; the important relationship between hospices and nursing homes; hospice contracting issues and how the new CoPs have changed requirements; the increasingly important role of the medical director and regulatory issues associated with that role; and ADRs, probe edits and appeals.

The conference will be held May 5, 2009 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Johnston. [For more information and to register online, click here.](#)

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Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor Update

Earlier this week, HPCAI received handout materials from the Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC), HealthDataInsights (HDI), which has jurisdiction over the state of Iowa. These materials were used in outreach sessions in states of Region D that are scheduled for the first of three rounds of implementation. Currently Iowa is scheduled for outreach in August. At that time HDI will be able to begin reviewing Medicare claims for improper payments.

As the HDI slides indicate, on March 30 it will launch a RAC-dedicated Web site www.racinfo.com. At that time hospitals will be able to provide contact information to HDI to ensure requests for additional documentation are directed to the appropriate staff. HPCAI is recommending hospices identify two contacts in the case the primary contact is unavailable. This will be an important step as providers have 45 days to respond to the RAC with additional documentation or the claim will be denied.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the RACs are working through provider associations to schedule outreach efforts. HPCAI has had preliminary communication with HDI and will let hospitals know as soon as information is available for Iowa outreach efforts.

Please contact [Heather Hulscher](#) if you have any questions regarding the RAC program.

[Click here to download a copy of the handout materials and implementation schedule.](#)

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HPCAI Web Site Implements New E-Communication Tools

Suppose you have a problem, a challenge, or are seeking a new idea about something. Now, imagine that you could sit in a room with a dozen or so people from your discipline and share ideas. That is the idea behind HPCAI's list serves. A list serve is an electronic (i.e. through your e-mail) communication tool that many find extremely beneficial.

With HPCAI's list serves, you can tap into the wealth of expertise that exists across the state as easily as sending an e-mail message. You can learn, share, and reap the benefits of "talking" to others who work in your field from all parts of Iowa. Think of a list serve as a network of people who share your interests and to whom you can turn for answers, perspectives, ideas, problem solving and support.

To access the list serves, go to the HPCAI online [membership directory](#) tab and select one of the options on the left side menu (Volunteer Coordinators List Serve or Hospice Residence List Serve). From there, simply type in your e-mail address, select the list serve you'd like to belong to from the drop down menu, and click subscribe!

After your *free* subscription, simply click on the "Volunteer Coordinator" or "Hospice Residence" link at the bottom of the page and an email message will pop up (you may need to click "allow" on a security box if it pops up) that will go out to everyone registered for the list serve.

If you have any questions about the list serve, please contact [Heidi Lauer](#) at HPCAI!

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Recognition for NBCHPN Certification

It is more important now than ever to recognize the expertise that nurses and aides from Iowa's hospice and palliative care agencies have. Certification through the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses validates their skill and knowledge as experts in this special area of practice. It also speaks to the commitment to 'quality care' that their respective agencies have made and is identified as one of the components necessary for achieving excellence from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

HPCAI would like to recognize each nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse and hospice aide in Iowa that has demonstrated their commitment to excellence by becoming certified. As part of that effort, Margo Nixon, Education Coordinator, Hospice of Siouxland, volunteered to pull together initial lists of all those in Iowa who have earned their NBCHPN certification. The list is posted under the resources tab on the HPCAI Web site. [To review the list, click here.](#) Many thanks to Margo for her work on this, and to each of the certified nurses and aides in Iowa.

In order to keep this list on the Web site current, as nurses and aides at your facility earn their certification, please forward their names to [Stacey Nay](#).

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ELNEC Courses Now Available Through Hospice Education Network

The Hospice Education Network has joined with the End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium

(ELNEC) to make ELNEC courses available online. The Hospice Education Network and ELNEC will offer the hospice industry online subscription access to eight ELNEC courses presented by national ELNEC faculty. The programs are part of the ELNEC Core training that are provided across the county by individuals who have completed the ELNEC Train the Trainer program.

Some of the courses available through the online subscription include Introduction to Palliative Care Nursing, Cultural Considerations in Palliative Care, Pain Management in Palliative Care and Ethical Issues in Palliative Care.

[For more information on these ELNEC courses, click here.](#)

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Hospice News Network

NHPCO Suggests Actions Based on Opioid Shortage

Because of a shortage of opioids, NHPCO says hospices should 1) Check on the level of supplies that their medication providers have on hand; 2) Familiarize themselves with dosing ratios and conversions because some alternative medications may have to be used; 3) Make sure clinical staffs have access to literature and drug prescribing information, and to a clinical pharmacist “with expert knowledge of opioid dosing strategies”; 4) Provide information about the opioid shortage to your staff, referring physicians, and your prescribers so they are prepared to address patient, caregiver, and provider concerns. (*NHPCO News Alert*, 3/11)

Take Care Not to Violate New CoPs Regarding Training

Hospices should be careful not to violate the new CoPs when teaching nursing home and other provider staff about hospice. Training should “focus on providing care and improving outcomes,” not on marketing. Hospices should avoid “giving a provider something of value for a referral, which would violate the anti-kickback statute.” Any remuneration, no matter how small, “could constitute a violation if it’s intended to induce patient referrals for items or services reimbursed by a federal healthcare program.” (*Eli’s Home Care Week*, 3/2)

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